

Plan Development Process Tools

The steps taken to evaluate unmet needs and gaps in services, gain public input, and coordinate with local and/or regional stakeholders must be described in the Plan Development Process portion of the plan.

Participation in planning activities must include participation and/or representation of older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the general public.

Each local area has flexibility in determining the best way to ensure that the above groups are involved in the plan development process. Below are examples of core activities in the plan development process.

Required Plan Development Activity

1. **Convene a planning committee.** Include members who are older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes, and include formal representation of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and the general public. Through a series of meetings, the planning committee can identify needs and strategies to meet those needs, and determine priorities of those strategies. This planning committee might be larger than typical committees because of the wide range of membership. The number of members will depend upon the make-up of the county or counties involved. For example, a region with numerous agencies may have a committee with 25 members; compared to a smaller rural county that may be able to cover all of its key stakeholders with a committee of half that size. Planning committee membership could include some or all of the following representatives from the planning area:
 - a. Public Transit
 - b. Senior Center or other organization serving older adults
 - c. Local County and/or City government
 - d. Department of Developmental Disabilities (local/regional) office and programs
 - e. Metropolitan Planning Organization, Regional Planning Organization, and Regional Transportation Planning Organization
 - f. Department of Health and Human Services office (local/regional)
 - g. Economic Development Office
 - h. Chamber of Commerce and/or local business organization
 - i. Bicycle Advocacy organization

Optional Plan Development Activities

At least two of the following activities must be included and documented in the planning process.

2. **Host a community planning session.** The lead agency can host a local planning session. Invitations must be distributed to older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and representation from public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and the general public. This planning session should have a formal facilitator.

The meeting location must be in a wheelchair accessible facility and, if at all possible, should be accessible by public transit. Alternative formats such as offering translation services for people with limited English proficiency or hearing impairments must be offered, as needed. The purpose of the planning session should be to identify unmet transportation needs based on personal and professional experiences, identify goals and implementation strategies to meet needs, and set priorities.

Sample meeting announcements, invitations, flyers, and newspaper articles are provided in the ODOT Coordinated Plan Toolkit.

3. **Conduct focus groups.** As an option to gain additional insight, the lead agency could choose to conduct a series of focus groups with stakeholder groups. Focus groups should have a neutral facilitator who is not partial to any outcomes, and topics of discussion should include gaps and unmet transportation needs, potential solutions to address the identified needs, and priorities.

It is appropriate to have separate focus groups for different stakeholder groups, such as older adults, individuals with disabilities, young professionals, transportation providers, employers, and members of the general public.

A focus group session is typically limited to no more than 12 people. Participation in the focus group can be solicited through an “opportunity to volunteer” announcement distributed by the Lead Agency and/or partner organizations (such as those on the planning committee, if applicable). The Lead Agency will review the applications from volunteers and select the most appropriate participants for each focus group.

4. **Distribute surveys about transportation needs and strategies to meet those needs.** Surveys should ask if the respondent is an individual with a disability or an older adult. Surveys should not only be electronic, but also available in paper form, and should consider accessibility needs, including alternative formats, literacy levels, and limited English proficiency.

Separate surveys are recommended for stakeholder groups, the general public and transportation providers. Transportation providers should be asked to provide data regarding their existing services while the general public and other stakeholder groups will provide data about their unmet transportation needs. Both the transportation providers and the general public will provide feedback about their ‘vision’ for the future of transportation in the area covered by the plan.

Sample public and stakeholder surveys are available in the ODOT Coordinated Plan Toolkit.